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AUTHOR Anderson, Charles W.
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ABSTRACT

The argument of this book is that the modern American university has given up its responsibility to provide a thoughtful, coherent, and well-articulated education to undergraduates. It is asserted that the university should be neither a trade school nor a repository of tradition, but rather an institution with the responsibility for the preparation of citizens, the training of professionals, and the communication of a cultural inheritance. The book suggests that by applying the methods of practical reason, where any alternative must be shown to be an improvement over prevailing practice, teachers and students will be able to think critically about the essential purposes of human activity and apply this knowledge to the underlying arguments of any text. These ideas are developed in eight chapters titled: "Liberal Education and Practical Reason"; "The Rationale of the Going Concern"; "Purpose: What Do We Expect a University to Do?"; "Competence: What Can We Know? What Are We Entitled to Teach?"; "Efficiency: The Mystery of Teaching and Learning"; "The Cultivation of Practical Reason"; "The Core of the Curriculum"; and "The Governance of the University". (Contains approximately 100 chapter endnotes.) (BF)

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